

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1402

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 137

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PO

SUBJ: SOCIALIST PARTY ATTITUDE TOWARD PROPOSED UNITARY
LABOR LAW

REF: LISBON 104

1. FRANCISCO MARCELO CURTO, SOCIALIST PARTY OFFICIAL
RESPONSIBLE FOR LABOR AFFAIRS, CONFIRMED THAT SOCIALIST PARTY
DISTURBED BY UNITARY LABOR LAW PROPOSED BY LABOR MINISTER COSTA
MARTINS IN CABINET MEETING JANUARY 7. CURTO STATES THAT HE HAD
HEARD THAT PPD HAD THREATENED TO PULL OUT OF GOVERNING COALITION
IF LAW PASSED IN FORM PROPOSED BUT HE HAD NO FIRM INFORMATION
AND COULD NOT CONFIRM THIS REPORT. SOCIALIST PARTY, ON OTHER
HAND, WHILE SHARING PPD POSITION OF OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED LAW,
HAS NOT EVEN CONSIDERED POSSIBILITY OF PULLING OUT OF
GOVERNMENT. SOCIALISTS SEE LABOR LAW AS ONLY ONE PART OF
LARGER QUESTION REGARDING COMMUNISTS' PARTICIPATION IN
GOVERNMENT.

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2. MINISTER OF LABOR COSTA MARTINS TOLD LABATT ON JANUARY 6 THAT PROPOSED LABOR LAW WOULD BE MODIFIED TO MINIMIZE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL ROLE IN LABOR AFFAIRS, E.G., NO POLITICAL PARTY OFFICIAL COULD ALSO BE UNION OFFICIAL. CURTO ALSO CONFIRMED THAT MINISTER OF LABOR IS TO SUBMIT A MODIFIED VERSION OF PROPOSED UNITARY LABOR LAW FOR CABINET CONSIDERATION ON JANUARY 17. CURTO CLAIMS MODIFIED VERSION OF LAW EVEN MORE FAVORABLE TO POSITIONS SUPPORTED BY INTERSINDICAL.

3. CURTO LAMENTS CONTINUED ABSENCES OF PARTY'S GENERAL SECRETARY MARIO SOARES ON FOREIGN MINISTRY TRAVELS WHILE IMPORTANT DECISIONS ARE PENDING, BUT SAID THAT SOARES CONCERNED OVER POSSIBILITY OF OUTBREAK OF CIVIL WAR BETWEEN LIBERATION GROUPS IN ANGOLA.

4. COMMENT: FACT THAT SOCIALIST PARTY NEWSPAPER REPUBLICA BEAT OUT CHALLENGES AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL BY INTERSINDICAL AND COMMUNIST PARTY NEWSPAPER AVANTE FOR POSSESSION AND USE OF THE PRINTING PLANT OF DEFUNCT EPOCA INDICATES THAT SOCIALISTS STILL WIELD CONSIDERABLE FORCE WITHIN GOVERNMENT AND THAT SOCIALISTS AND PPD TOGETHER HAVE POSSIBILITY OF FORCING MODIFICATION OF PROPOSED UNITARYLABOR LAW. COMMUNISTS AND INTERSINDICAL ARE REPORTEDLY SCHEDULING LABOR DEMONSTRATION JANUARY 14 PRIOR TO JANUARY 17 CABINET MEETING.

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